

KEEP OUT! Senator Richard B. Russell of Georgia, chairman of the C.I.A. watchdog subcommittee, opposes a move to expand the mem-

bership of the group. He contends the Senate's Foreign Relations Committee, which voted for the change, is trying to "muscle in."

How Many Watchdogs for C.I.A.?

By E. W. KENWORTHY

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 21—Once again, after a lapse of 10 years, the United States Senate is going to have a chance to do something, if it so desires, about the vexed question of "legislative oversight" of the operations of the Central Intelligence Agency.

Two weeks ago, the Foreign Relations Committee approved, 14 to 5, a resolution to set up a nine-man Select Committee on Intelligence Operations, with the Armed Services, Appropriations and Foreign Relations Committees each furnishing three members. The resolution is now scheduled to reach the Senate floor next Wednesday.

Ever since the C.I.A. was established by the National Security Act of 1947, the director of the agency has reported in tightest secrecy to subcommittees of the Armed Services and Appropriations Committees of both houses. The House subcommittees meet separately; those in the Senate, because of duplicating membership, for convenience sake meet together.

C.I.A. Influence

The proposal for the enlarged watchdog committee was sponsored by Eugene J. McCarthy, Democrat of Minnesota, and it had the full support of J. W. Fulbright of Arkansas, the committee chairman.

Supporters of an expanded committee base their case on the assertion that the C.I.A., if it does not make foreign policy, certainly influences it, and therefore the Foreign Relations Committee should have a role in the legislative oversight.

Other reasons that, because of senatorial courtesy, cannot be publicly avowed, are that the present watchdog subcommittee of seven members is neither very aggressive nor inquisitive; that it is satisfied to be told no more than the director of the agency volunteers; that it is inclined to be content with military justifications for an operation without considering its possibly unfortunate political consequences; and that the information it receives about an operation is supplied after the event, too late for the exercise of Congressional caution or advice.

In an obvious effort to influence the committee vote on the day be-

fore it was taken, Senator Richard B. Russell of Georgia, chairman of both the Armed Services Committee and the C.I.A. watchdog subcommittee, bitterly assailed the McCarthy resolution on two grounds.

First, he said, the Foreign Relations Committee is trying to "muscle in" on the jurisdiction of the Armed Services Committee.

Second, he asserted, enlargement of the C.I.A. subcommittee would put its necessary secrecy in jeopardy and probably endanger the lives of C.I.A. agents and their informants. He is proud to say, Mr. Russell went on, that there has never been a "harmful leak" from the subcommittee. But he had read articles based on leaks from the Foreign Relations Committee, and a "segment of the press" was now exerting pressure to expand the C.I.A. subcommittee in the hope of getting information now denied it.

The first reason was widely regarded as the "real" reason for Mr. Russell's alarm, and the second as merely a "good" reason. In fact, the Senator's appeal to security aroused some smiles in the press gallery and some ire among some of his colleagues.

On the one hand, Mr. Russell seemed to be suggesting, since representatives from the Foreign Relations Committee would be chosen, according to custom, from the four ranking members, that Democratic Senators Fulbright and John Sparkman of Alabama, and Republican Senators Bourke B. Hickenlooper of Iowa and George D. Aiken of Vermont, could not be trusted with secret information. Some Senators felt this implication was plainly insulting.

Question of Leaks

On the other hand, Mr. Russell seemed to be saying that House members could be more trusted than Senators, since there are 15 members on the two house subcommittees dealing with the C.I.A.

Reporters were somewhat amused also at the aspersions cast on the Foreign Relations Committee, since the only leak of any consequence from that committee in a long time involved the executive hearings last summer into the Dominican crisis. No military security was involved in the testimony taken from officials. However, the hearings did contain highly embarrassing evidence of

conflicts between what happened in Santo Domingo and what high Administration officials said had happened.

The C.I.A. subcommittee is part of the power complex that is centered in the committees on Armed Services, Appropriations and Aeronautical and Space Sciences. The members can be counted on to fight to preserve their power against dilution. Furthermore, they can count on help from other members of the Senate's power hierarchy, such as the then freshman Senator Mike Mansfield of Montana discovered a decade ago.

Toward Compromise

He introduced a resolution to create a joint committee on the Central Intelligence Agency in line with a recommendation of the Hoover Commission. He had 34 co-sponsors. But by the time his resolution came to a vote, 14 of them reversed themselves, and the resolution was defeated, 59 to 27.

It is likely that the McCarthy resolution will suffer the same fate as Mr. Mansfield's if it comes to a vote. However, the vote could be so close as to embarrass Mr. Russell. Therefore, the expectation here is that Senator Russell may negotiate a face-saving compromise with Senator Fulbright; for example, one that would permit three members of the Foreign Relations Committee to be ex-officio members of the C.I.A. watchdog subcommittee.

There has been a week's delay in the original schedule of bringing the McCarthy resolution to the floor, partly, some observers feel, because Senator Fulbright noted that a member of the present C.I.A. watchdog group was presiding at the time he planned to make the move.

Since Senator Russell has indicated he will try a parliamentary maneuver to have the resolution referred "to some other committee," the measure's proponents felt they would do better to await a more propitious time.

In the interval, Senator McCarthy has sent letters to colleagues whose support he regards as at least possible, urging them to vote against any move to refer the resolution to another committee—and its probable death. Let's have a vote on the "substance of the matter in an orderly manner," he asked.

The New York Times (by George James)

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